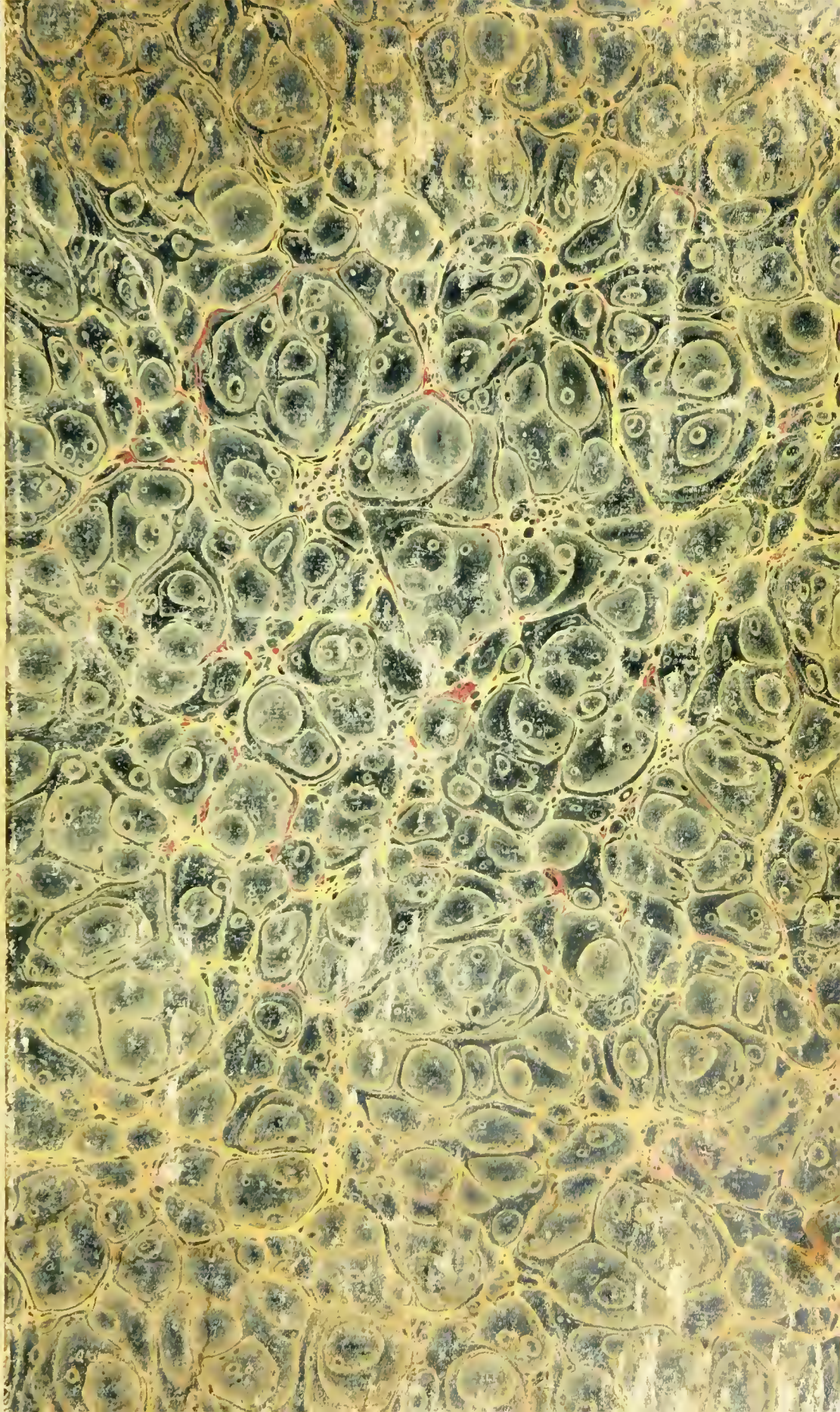


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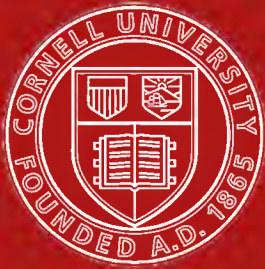
The planning of Christian Science church



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THE PLANNING  
OF  
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE  
CHURCH  
EDIFICES

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By ELMER GREY

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FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, BOSTON

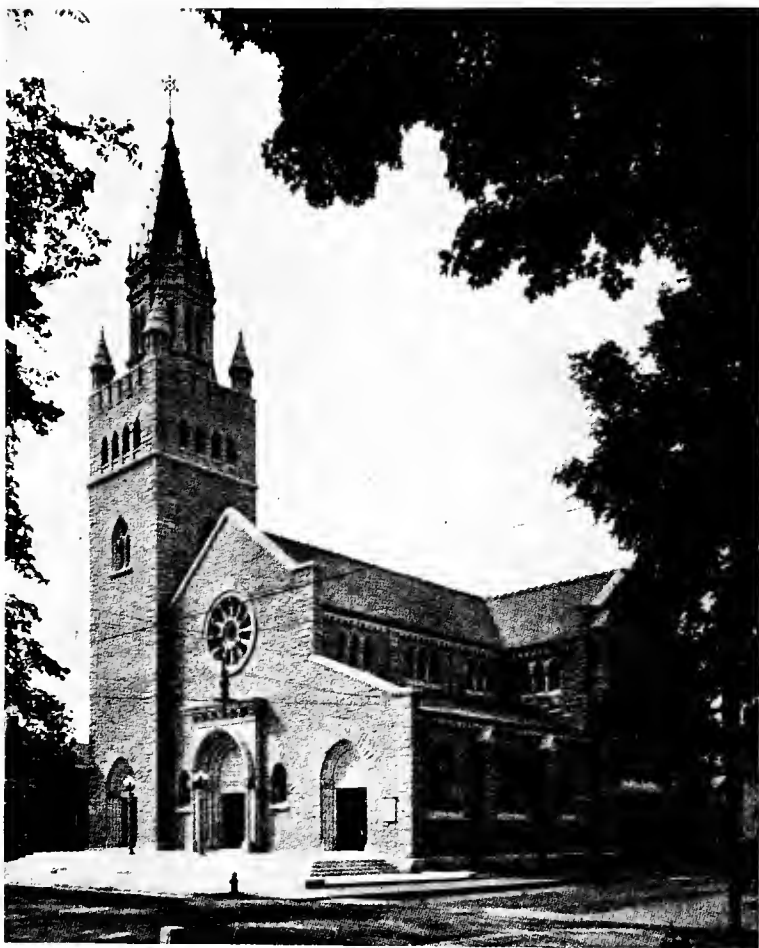
## NEW-WORLD ARCHITECTURE



AMERICANS as a rule little realize the upward-impelling influence of noble art on man and nation. Indeed, we as a people have been so concerned in subduing the primeval forest, in cultivating the virgin prairie, in wresting from nature her hoarded wealth buried deep in earth or hidden in mountain recesses, and in harnessing the subtle elements that they might do the bidding of commerce and manufacture, that not only our artistic appreciation but our very sense of moral proportion has been dulled. It is only of late that a considerable number of the more thoughtful of our people have come to realize that permanent greatness or enduring civilization demands that excessive devotion to material acquisition or the sordid spirit of money-getting shall give place to the higher demands of life. While there was a time when the thought of the people necessarily had to be given chiefly to the provision of creature comforts and the acquiring of material means, that day has passed and the hour has arrived when, if the Republic is to take its place among the peoples who build on solid foundations, the material demands must yield to those things which nourish man on the higher plane of his being—to the culture and development of the ethical, esthetic and rational sides of life; to spiritual, artistic and philosophical or scientific advance. Utility is vital to progress, but utility, if made a be-all and end-all, is fatal to true greatness; and the time has come in this great and rich young land when the ideal of justice or the concept of the Golden Rule, with its creed of "all for all," or the greatest good for all, must take the place of the ideal of war or victory at the expense of others' ruin—the creed of "every man for himself"; and this noble ethical concept must be companioned by the cultivation of art or appreciation for the beautiful, in order to satisfy the profound yearnings of man's nature for satisfaction in such a way that the soul shall be nourished.

There is a beauty that exalts and refines, and there is a counterfeit beauty that ministers to the lower side of life, educating men downward rather than upward. The new demand is that we have a noble art for America that shall be instinct with moral idealism; an art that first of all is sincere and true and whose atmosphere shall be wholesome and uplifting as are the glories of nature and the great masters' works of a Phidias, a Michael Angelo, a Raphael, a Bach, or a Wagner; an art that shall be worthy of the masters of other days who wrought the greatest creations in architecture, in sculpture, in painting and in poetry.

—*The Arena*



FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, CONCORD, N. H.  
ALLEN AND COLLINS, ARCHITECTS



FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, LOS ANGELES  
ELMER GREY, ARCHITECT

## The Planning of Christian Science Church Edifices

BY ELMER GREY

*[Reprinted from the Architectural Record]*



RELIGIOUS organizations should always build well. The commercial spirit of our age is so inclined to be a mad race for the "almighty dollar," and commercial structures are so often built with the idea of obtaining the most show for the least money, that when religious organizations build they should show that their aims are higher. The trend of preachment or sermon in all churches is for the things of lasting value, the real as against the seeming; so when a church builds, it should show that it believes in putting such preachments into actual practice, that it demands the real in architecture instead of that which only seems real. Many people of taste and discrimination, who do not look farther, will judge it thus, by its acts rather than by its words.

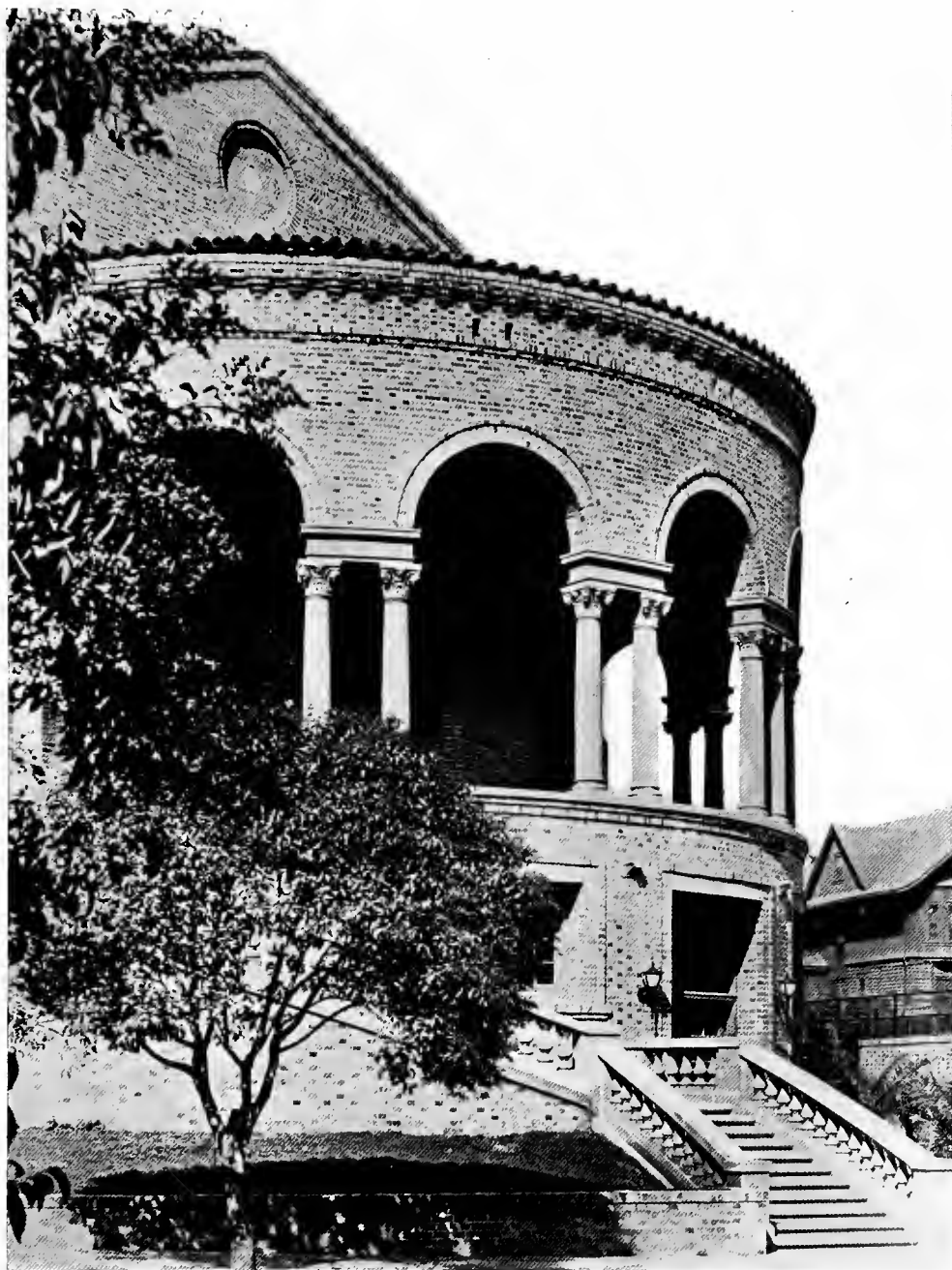
It is not always easy for a church to build well, however. For one reason, its governing body may be made up largely of the kind of men who are accus-

tomed to build cheaply in their private life, and who have not been educated by environment or training to appreciate the value of building better. Thus at the start, a campaign of education is often necessary within the governing body of the church itself, and to accomplish results from it quickly enough to be of use in the problem at hand is often difficult. All sorts of obstacles may be thrown in the way which obscure the issue and render the work harder than it otherwise would be. As the *Christian Science Monitor* once aptly put it, "There is a perpetual battle on between the pseudo and the real. Such victories for a higher standard (in architecture) as have been won are due to the intelligent minority. A prosaic, unimaginative, utilitarian majority have yet to be won to desire finer art in architecture and have yet to be taught the rudiments, once the desire is aroused."

The churches which have, both in the past and the present, succeeded best in the quality of their architecture are those which have followed closely along orthodox architectural lines. This is because excellence in architecture, as in other lines of human endeavor, comes from a gradual process of development, from an improvement of good things already done, rather than from a sudden bursting forth of some altogether new thing. The church architecture of the remote past, by just such a process of development and adaptation to the varying conditions of different countries finally culminated in the splendid Gothic, Romanesque and Renaissance cathedrals of England, France and Italy; and these wonderful monuments have in their turn provided the inspiration for most of the best church architecture of the present day.

The Christian Science denomination has, however, come into the field bringing with it the necessity for departing radically from these long accepted church types. The building activity in this one denomination during the last decade has been so great as to make it a very strong influence affecting the architectural aspect of our cities. The plans of church edifices, like the plans of other buildings, are determined very largely by the habits of their congregations, and the forms of service carried on within them; and Christian Science has a form of service, at its Wednesday evening meetings at least, which is radically different from that of the orthodox churches represented by the great cathedrals. This different form of service, as well as some other habits of Christian Science congregations, necessitates the designing of a different type of church edifice, which constitutes practically a new problem in architecture.

All Christian denominations endeavor to pattern their work after that of the early Christians. It might consequently be supposed that Christian Science could look for its architectural models to the plans used by the early Christians, and thus get back to fundamentals. But present-day social conditions and the practical requirements of all present-day forms of worship are so totally different from those of the early Christians that this is impossible. It is Christian churches of a later date, therefore, which must be used for models, but with such modifications of plan and exterior as are necessitated by the different forms of service carried on today. Of just what these modifications should consist varies with each problem and depends upon the requirements of the individual congregation, as governed by its size, the location of the property, the character of the surrounding neighborhood, whether business or residential, etc., etc., Two points should, however, be constantly borne in mind. One, that the unquestionably fine architecture of the great cathedrals is the result of centuries of painstaking thought, rare artistic ability, and much conscientious endeavor, that as a consequence it reached a point of perfection which

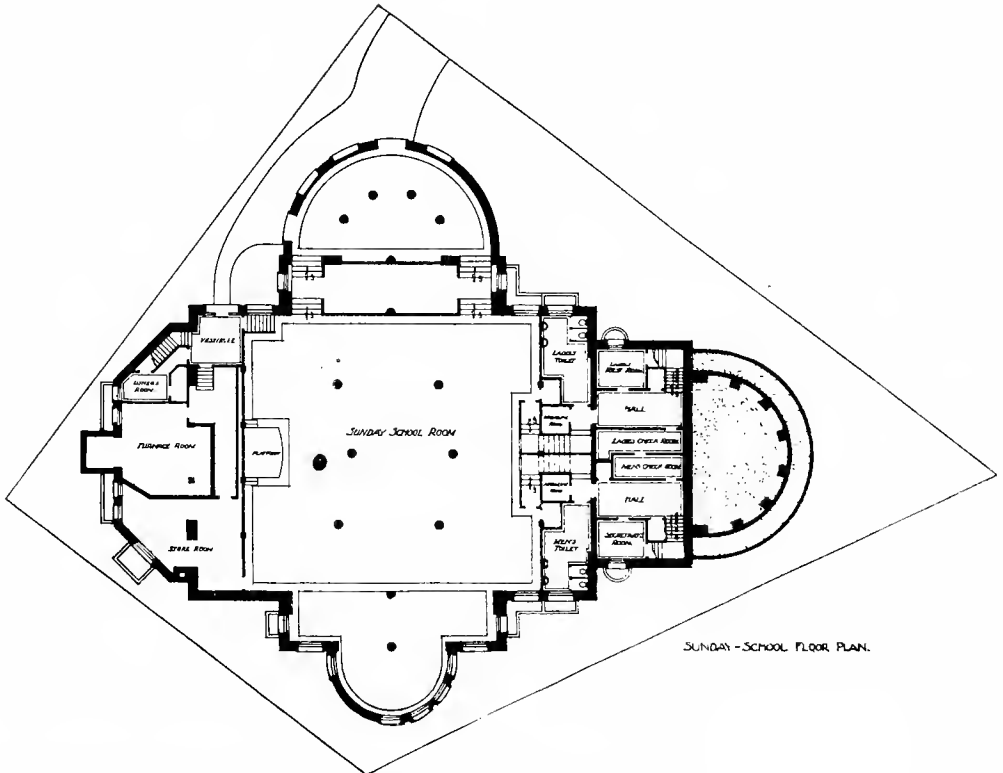
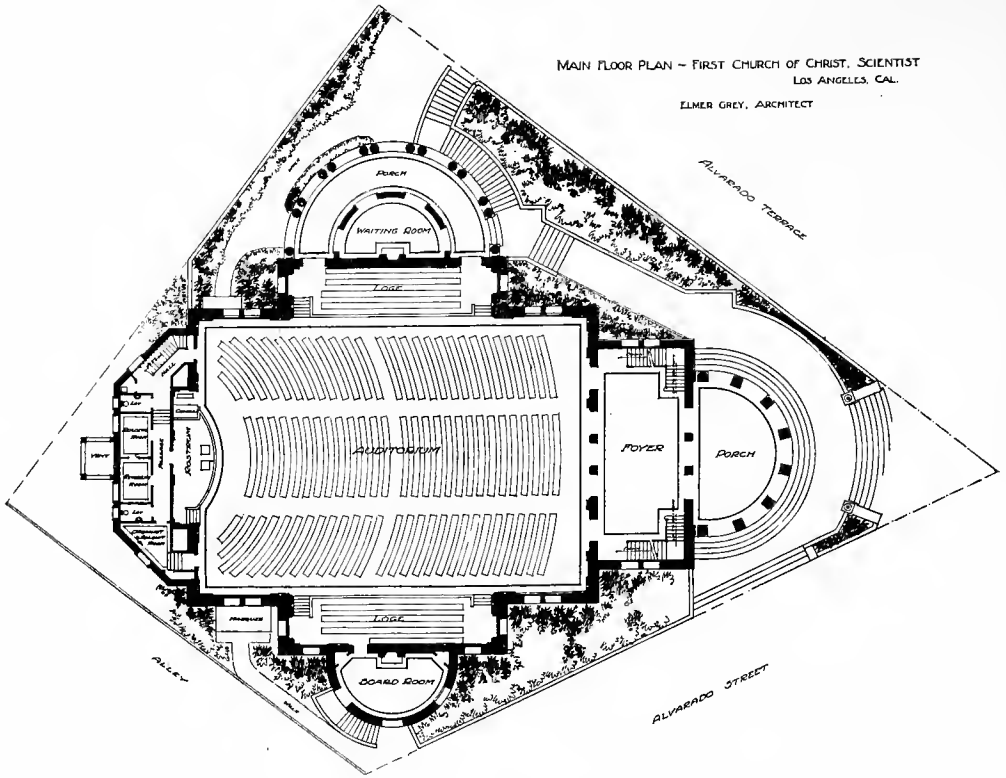


DETAIL OF LOGGIA, FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, LOS ANGELES



MAIN FLOOR PLAN - FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST  
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

ELMER GREY, ARCHITECT



SUNDAY-SCHOOL FLOOR PLAN.

in its way can scarcely be excelled, and that this high degree of excellence should prompt us to look to and study it continually as a great object lesson. The other point is that, notwithstanding this fact, where there are new and very different conditions to meet today, and sensible provision for which necessitates radical departures from the cathedral type of church, such departures should be made unhesitatingly. We should not slavishly copy the past. It is by meeting new needs with newly devised ends that advance has always been made in any line of endeavor. We should, in other words, strive to profit by the lessons of the past, as by an extremely valuable inheritance, but at the same time we should endeavor to keep our minds free from danger of being fettered by it.

One of the distinguishing and also one of the most beautiful features of the old cathedral plans is a long narrow nave, flanked by generous side aisles, the two separated by rows of intervening columns. In many modern churches, however, all members of the congregation wish to hear the sermon and see the rostrum, and such a church plan consequently is impracticable without considerable modification. A broader nave and much narrower aisles in which latter are either no seats or but a few used for overflow purposes, virtually becomes necessary.

Again, the interior of some of the great Renaissance cathedrals, such as St. Peter's and St. Paul's, is marked by a dome, and this feature has so frequently been found to interfere with good acoustics that it is now being used less and less.

Christian Science congregations require a much larger vestibule or foyer than that to be found in the cathedral models. This they use for the purpose of assembling after service to meet and chat with friends. A foyer large enough to fulfill such a requirement is another marked departure.

Whether it is because these various changes from the historic church plan have so often resulted unfortunately to the exterior appearance of the new edifices or whether it be some other reason, at any rate the attempt has frequently been made to start their planning with an exterior of some other kind of building than the cathedral type and then to adapt a practical interior to it. The result in almost all cases has been disastrous in one way or another, either to the interior or to the exterior, and for the reason that it is just the reverse of the method which should be employed in good planning. As a writer in the *Architectural Record* once put it, it is an attempt "to ignore the requirements as a basis for the architecture of the building, to put up a front which is not a countenance but a mask—an assemblage of features of historic architecture \* \* \* compiled into a pleasing, impressive result \* \* \* mechanically adjusted to the interior behind it. The apartments for the sake of which the building exists, instead of being made the basis of the architecture, instead of being expressed, are suppressed, hidden behind the mask or the masquerade of monumental architecture, itself entirely irrelevant to them." The historic styles of architecture which have endured and which we admire as having distinct character are the result of people having planned and built according to the practical requirements of their day. We in our time, therefore, in starting to plan a church (or any other building, for that matter) should likewise decide first what our practical requirements are and then make our plan accordingly. The exterior style, influenced, of course, and unavoidably, by the styles which history has handed down to us, will then follow

naturally. Indeed, the process of thus first assembling the practical requirements into the form of a plan will usually go far toward deciding what the nature of the exterior or its architectural style will be.

The make-up of the governing body of a church, where the governing power does not reside in one man, is often one of the most important factors that make for the success or failure of church building. In the case of a one-man power, such as a bishop, for example, if he be possessed of wide culture and broad experience as such men often are, this side of the problem is adequately taken care of. But if the church be represented by a body of men and women, such as a Board of Directors, the problem is very different. If they have not been chosen especially for the building task, they may or may not be possessed of the proper qualifications for such work. Previous building experience among them may be of advantage in some cases, but in many others it is not as important as other qualifications. The technical knowledge necessary to make plans correctly, and to build well, will be forthcoming from the architect if he has been wisely chosen. He may make mistakes, as everyone sometimes does, but they are not apt to be as grievous ones as would be made if a layman's advice in such matters were followed. Indeed, if a layman be possessed of only a little technical knowledge without a corresponding appreciation of its limitations, the little he does know may be a detriment to the work rather than a help, for the reason of its inspiring an over-confidence in his opinion among his co-workers on the Board. The most important qualifications to have for those who direct such enterprises are such as will enable them to do good "team-work" with their architect, intelligently criticising his designs, guiding him in broad policies affecting the interests of the church, and following him when his technical training warrants his taking the lead. Such qualifications are made up partly of good business judgment, partly of that intelligence which Dr. Charles W. Elliott has said is indicated by confidence in experts, and partly of a trained discrimination between what is good and what is poor in architecture. Regarding this latter qualification the *Christian Science Monitor* once had an editorial which, although it was entitled "The Intelligent Reading of Pictures," applies equally well here because it applies also to the reading of architecture. With but slight transpositions in order to make it refer to architecture, it read in part as follows: "Most of us may do well to consider how little time we have given to preparing ourselves to read this language of mass, of proportion, of harmony. These things are not the mere jargon of architects. They have all as real a meaning as the laws of language, without which men were unable to speak two intelligible words. Men could not understand one another in speech if all did not recognize common laws of expression in sound. They do not understand a speech which they have not taken the trouble to learn. Then let us not turn away from the silent building before us and affirm that it is void of meaning just because we cannot read the language.

"Architectural forms are symbols as truly as the vocables of speech or their written symbols are; they need to be translated into thought just as surely as words must be. We cannot read them by a casual glance any more than we could read a foreign tongue in that way. If we study a page of an unknown language even without a dictionary, little by little, we may find printed signs that are like something in our own language, and it is said that persons have learned Latin in this way—just by pouring over a Latin book without aid of grammar or dictionary. So if we study works of architecture faithfully we



DETAIL OF ENTRANCE, FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, LOS ANGELES

shall discover little by little things that relate themselves to our former experience of beauty, and in time we shall understand what the architect is trying to tell us."

Now, this kind of trained discrimination in architectural matters, coupled with good business judgment, may or may not happen to be possessed collectively by the governing body of a church, appointed at some previous time for other purposes and subsequently confronted with the task of erecting a new edifice. The individual members of such a body may or may not have been trained for such a special task. To remove such an element of chance, one particular church in the West adopted the method of electing at the very beginning of their planning operations a Building Committee chosen with special reference to its fitness for such work and to serve throughout the entire planning and building operations. The plan worked so very admirably that it would be well if more churches adopted a similar one. With such method, if some of the members of an existing governing body happen to be the best fitted for the task, that fact will appear in the election, and such members may then become members of the Building Committee as well. If, however, others are better fitted, then that fact will appear. Such a Building Committee should be chosen early enough to have a voice with the main governing body in the selection of the architect, for it is with him that it is afterward to do its work. Such early election will also give the Committee the opportunity to be familiar with every detail of the plans from their earliest inception, which it is quite desirable that it should be.

There are various methods of selecting the architect for a church, some of which are better than others. One method which would not here be mentioned were it not for the fact that it still is sometimes followed, is to let it be known that plans are wanted for a church edifice and to invite or encourage architects to submit sketches for it gratuitously. Any good business man should see at once that this method is one not likely to bring the best results. It is virtually asking for something for nothing. A sketch or plan is a thing of value only as it represents time and thought. Almost any church problem requires considerable thought before a plan can be made for it that will be of much value. Some particularly complex problems require a very great deal of time to even partially solve them. An architect's work consists of making plans and supervising the erection of buildings, and if very much of his time and thought are given up to making sketches gratuitously, it should be evident that they must necessarily be taken from other work which he has already been commissioned to do. No professional man whose services are enough in demand to keep him busy can afford thus to take time from his regular work and give it away. If he does do so in one instance, it cannot be worth much in another. Architects of mediocre ability, therefore, who are unable to obtain enough work on the strength of their reputation and who have time on their hands are usually the only kind who will agree to such methods—and almost always those are the kind of architects who are secured that way.

Another method of selecting an architect is by competition. For the same reason, however, that few reputable architects will make sketches gratuitously, few will enter a competition in which there is not some provision made for adequate remuneration for the time spent on the work in case the competitor is not given the award. Such remunerative scheme is only fair for other reasons. Not only are many drawings in a competition likely to aid the owner in making his decision, but frequently some ideas shown in drawings



DETAIL OF LOGGIA, FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, LOS ANGELES



THE OFFICE, FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, LOS ANGELES

other than the successful one will be embodied in the final plans and so are of definite value in that way and should be paid for. The necessity for remunerating the competitor if competent architects are to be secured makes the competitive system expensive. In order, however, to make it as fair as possible in cases where it is adopted, the American Institute of Architects has instituted a program under which among its members competitions should be conducted. It is not the aim of such a program to dictate to the owner the course he is to pursue, but rather to assist him by advising the adoption of such uniform methods as experience has proven to be just and wise, and productive of the best results.

So important does the adoption of such program appear to members of the Institute that they do not take part in competitions except under such rules. Considerable time is usually required to prepare a program in such a manner as to make it fair to all concerned, and since it must be prepared especially for each problem, the competitive system thus becomes a relatively slow as well as an expensive one. Other features of the system are discussed in a pamphlet issued by the American Institute as follows:

"The interests of the owner may be seriously prejudiced by admitting as a competitor any architect who cannot in advance establish to the satisfaction of the owner his competence to design and execute the work."

"It is sometimes urged that by admitting all who wish to take part in competition, some unknown but brilliant designer may thus be found. If the ob-



ject of a competition were a set of sketches, such reasoning might be valid. But sketches give no evidence that their author has the natural artistic ability to fulfill their promise, or that he has the technical knowledge necessary to control the design of the highly complex structure and equipment of a modern building or that he has executive ability for large affairs or the force to compel the proper execution of contracts. The attempts to defend the owner's interests by associating an architect of ability with one lacking in experience has generally been found to be unsuccessful in practice."

"As an incident, a good preliminary scheme may sometimes be obtained, but the Institute is of the opinion that competitions are in the main of no advantage to the owner. It therefore recommends that, except in cases in which competition is unavoidable, an architect be employed by direct selection upon the sole basis of his fitness for the work."

This recommendation that the architect be selected with reference to his "fitness for the work" is, of course, the best method. The young man in architecture should be given a chance, but experience is so important a requirement in building operations of importance that, as a rule, the young man should have his chance only as he has won it, by proving on smaller pieces of work his fitness for larger and still larger undertakings.

The architect having been selected, the real work of planning the edifice begins. All the conditions governing the problem will first have to be studied by him and from such study he will evolve a tentative plan for the best general scheme for the building. His work is not so much a process of creation as it is one of discovery. To a man of ability the right ideas will disclose themselves if only the proper attitude of mind toward them be adopted. He is the best architect, other things being equal, who, without forcing his own preconceived notions upon a problem, allows its solution to unfold naturally from an unbiased study of its governing conditions.

What are known among architects as "preliminary plans" should show all the important parts of a scheme which are of a non-technical character, so that the governing body of a church may judge its various aspects before the architect proceeds further.

When the general scheme has thus been decided upon, the architect proceeds with what are known as "working plans." These latter are the final plans to be used in the construction of the building, and differ from the preliminary plans in being much more carefully drawn and in containing all the technical data and figures necessary for the erection of the building. Their preparation requires considerable time, very much more time, in fact, than most laymen can see the reason for; but all portions of these plans are interdependent as regards both form and accuracy of figures, and the thought and actual drafting necessary to make them so is inevitably an arduous and time-consuming process. Time and thought spent upon them are well spent, however, and save much trouble, vexation and "extras" later on during construction. The difference in the amount of time spent upon them by different architects often marks the difference in the value of their services and also necessitates a variation in fee; a fact which a large part of the public do not understand the reason for, but find out to their sorrow when they patronize a cheaper man!

There are several ways in which the construction of a church edifice may be managed, but generally speaking they may be grouped into what are known as the contract basis, the percentage basis, and a combination of the two. The last of the three methods has the most to recommend it, an honest contractor

being available. By this method the contractor agrees to build the structure for a certain stipulated sum, but he also agrees to keep track of the cost to him, and to do the work for such cost plus a certain percentage of profit. If in doing this the cost plus profit eventually proves to be less than his contract offer he gives the owner the benefit of the difference. The features of the method which recommend it are that the owner knows beforehand the maximum amount beyond which the building will not total in cost, but he also secures the building for actual cost plus a reasonable profit to the contractor, which may be a less sum.

The building once under way, the architect furnishes the contractor with full-size working details of its various parts, and also supervises the construction. Just what such supervision should consist of is often a matter that is not sufficiently understood between owner and architect beforehand. If the building be a large and important one, a clerk-of-the-works is likely to be necessary, such additional supervision usually being supplied by the owner.

In any case, however, it is likely to be either necessary or advisable that the architect, or his authorized representative, see the building upon an average of twice a week during the most active parts of its construction.



FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA  
ELMER GREY, ARCHITECT

## The Style of Christian Science Church Edifices

BY ELMER GREY

*[Reprinted from The Arena]*



THE RAPID growth of Christian Science during the last few years and the chance of its equally rapid growth in the future, make the question of the character of its church edifices one that should attract all lovers of good architecture whether they are interested in Christian Science or not. Any one who has been observant must realize that the architectural aspect of our cities is being continually influenced by the rapid multiplication of the churches of this denomination. Many of these structures are very commendable in design, a few are unusually fine examples of church architecture, while it should be admitted that many might have been better. A truism is, that the healthful progress of any art is



THE AUDITORIUM, FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA

furthered by intelligent criticism, by discussion between those who have acquired a more or less reliable judgment in such matters. Though tastes will differ even among critics, without the standard which the consensus of their intelligent critical opinions create, there would be no stable basis upon which to appraise the values of art.

Christian Scientists are slow to criticize, and architectural discussion does not enter into the text of their religious periodicals. Very little on the subject of their architecture has so far appeared in print. This article will attempt to discuss some points which heretofore seem either to have been misstated or not covered.

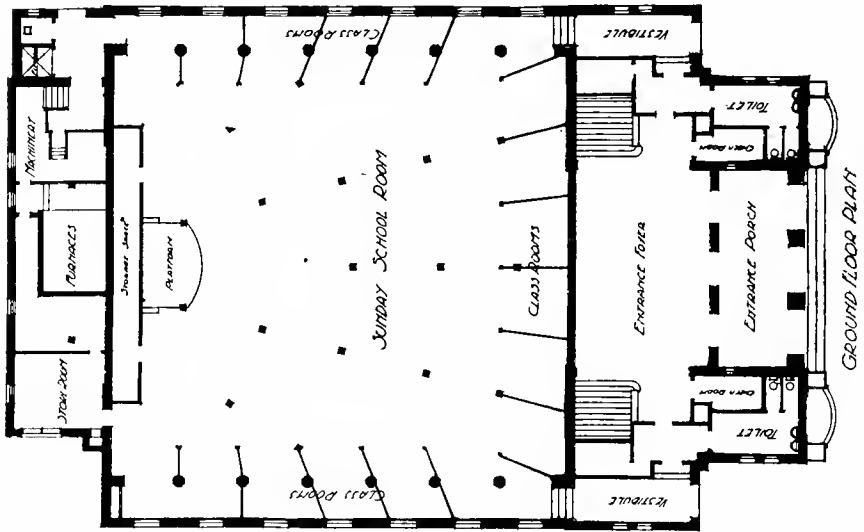
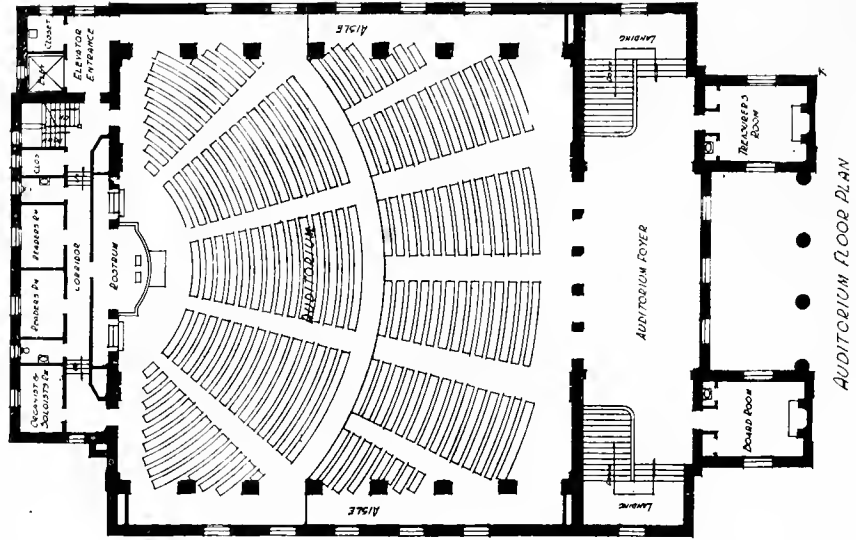
In order properly to consider the style in which these edifices should be built, it should be first borne in mind that Christian Science is, or at least claims to be the type of Christianity taught by Jesus. Ever since the formation of the first Christian Church there have been religions making a similar claim and it is no part of the present purpose to decide whether they were or were not what they claimed to be, or whether Christian Science is such. The pertinent fact here is that the latter faith does not pretend to be anything better than the religion of Jesus and that every Christian religion has also at least striven to be the same thing.

In the year 1 A. D. most of the world was pagan in its belief, and this belief found its most conspicuous architectural expression in the temples of ancient Greece. Jesus' followers first worshiped in cellars, in attics, in any places where they could safely congregate; but finally they became strong enough to erect houses of worship of their own, the first Christian church edifices. These early Christian churches followed the Roman basilicas in form, and these basilicas were not churches but halls of justice. This borrowed form for a church had, in the course of centuries of development, several noteworthy culminations in style, which distinctly showed that its buildings were to be used as churches and not as law courts. One of these styles was the Renaissance, a revival of the old Roman and Greek architecture which reached its highest perfection in such churches as St. Peter's in Rome, or Santa Maria della Salute in Venice. Another was the Romanesque, which is distinguishable by its liberal use of the round arch and the vault. Later on the Romanesque merged into the Gothic. The Gothic, almost losing sight of the motifs of Greek or pagan architecture, developed the arch and the vault to a high state of perfection, and reached its culminating glory in the cathedrals of France and England.

Nothing that has been done in church architecture since has equaled some of these original Renaissance, Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals and churches in point of beauty. They may well be taken as models, therefore, so far as their style is concerned, in designing Christian churches of to-day. This is not, however, what has always been done with Christian Science churches.

Many of them have attempted the Greek idea in their designs, various reasons being given for it. An objection commonly raised to the Gothic style is that it stands for the form and ceremony of the Orthodox church. It is contended that Christian Science is a considerable remove from Orthodox thought, and that this difference should show in the style of its church edifices. But the Renaissance stands for orthodox thought as truly as does the Gothic, as witness St. Peter's in Rome and numberless other Renaissance churches that have been built and are used to-day by one or another of the orthodox church forms. It has also been said that the idealism of Socrates, preached in pagan temple days, was nearer to the Christian idealism of Christian Science than is much of the later religion calling itself Christian, and that for this reason the Greek temples might appropriately be used as motifs for Christian Science architecture. But Greek historians tell us that the rank and file of the ancient Greeks were not at all the kind of people who were likely to have been followers of Socrates. They worshiped the gods and the oracles and participated in obscene rites. It is a question whether Socrates ever used the Greek temples for the purpose of promulgating his philosophy. And even if he did, even if we assume that the Greek temples stand for the thought of a few exceptional Greeks, a return from orthodox Christian thought to theirs would, as an editorial writer in the *Christian Science Journal* (May, 1908, p. 75) once made clear, be no advance.

Notwithstanding this fact, a magazine article once appeared stating that the Greek type of edifice is symbolical of Christian Science. We are glad to be able to give the opinion of a prominent Christian Scientist that there is absolutely no authority for such statement. He writes: "Mrs. Eddy has not, to my knowledge, even suggested that such a type be considered Christian Science architecture. The original Mother Church, built in 1894, upon Mrs. Eddy's suggestion and upon which she devoted much time and energy, is Romanesque. The church in Concord, her gift, erected in her home city, dedicated in 1904,



PLANS OF FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA



FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, NEW ORLEANS  
SAM STONE, JR., ARCHITECT

is a Gothic edifice. The immense new edifice of the Mother Church, dedicated in June, 1906, is of Italian Renaissance. These three buildings, one her gift and the other two suggested by her, seem to show that she has preferred the type of building which, when seen at such a distance that no inscription or title can be observed upon its face, is known immediately as a church edifice.

"Arguing the question from the point of the reflection of religion upon architecture it can truly be said that the Greek style of architecture is no more the interpretation of Christian Science into architecture than is the New England meeting house. If the Greek type for Christian churches had not appeared in this country or in Europe, and Christian Scientists were the first to erect such edifices then there might be some excuse for stating that they feel it to be typical of their religious belief. But scattered over this country and over Europe are hundreds of churches of other denominations built after the Greek style."

One writer has objected to the Gothic style because of its "symbolism." But all forms of art are symbolic, anything that expresses thought: language, music, all styles of architecture. The Bible is full of it, the Book of Revelations is almost entirely made up of it. It is not a question of symbolism, but of the kind of thought expressed by it. The Gothic for centuries stood for the only form of Christianity then existing. True, it was not Christian Science; but much of it was sincere reaching out for the Christ truth, earnest clinging to all of that truth then discerned; and were it not for those earnest efforts toward perpetuating Christianity, Christian Science might not be known to-day. Symbolism has been used by Christian Scientists in places, and with a freedom which should go far toward warranting its further use. In the original





FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, GERMANTOWN, PA.  
DAY AND KLAUDER, ARCHITECTS

Mother Church the "Director's Rose Window" is almost entirely symbolic. In Mrs. Eddy's room is another window of that nature. "Instead of symbolism declining with the growth of Christian Science," writes one Christian Scientist, "I feel that the case will be exactly the reverse; that there will be other symbols added to those that have accumulated during the last nineteen hundred years, for Christian Science will find new expressions and will take from those of the past the ones which appeal to it as higher types by their suggestiveness of spirituality."

The whole subject of style for Christian Science churches rests upon the question of how much Christian Science is allied to other Christian denominations. On this point Mrs. Eddy has said: "As the ages advance in spirituality Christian Science will be seen to depart from the trend of other Christian denominations in no wise except by increase of spirituality." (Miscellaneous Writings, p. 21.) Since Christian Scientists will be the last to question this statement, does it not seem that their edifices should follow the styles of other Christian churches? More than that, should they not, if possible, be an improvement upon, a perfection, of the beauty of those styles? Surely they should show that Christian Scientists as a class sympathize with the Christian history of the past, should impress outsiders as being the buildings of a great and permanent Christian church organization rather than those of a society having limited sympathies and hence limited capacities for good. Unless they do plainly tell this it should be easy to see how even the religion they represent might often be misjudged in consequence.

The Grecian style would be more acceptable with many for the purpose if it lent itself more readily to modern churchly expression. But the plan of a

Greek temple was so entirely different from that of a Christian Science church plan that it cannot consistently be used as a model for the latter. The arch, the vault and the dome, for instance, were unknown to the Greeks. Their columns and, in fact, their entire buildings were enormous in scale compared with what are required nowadays. They did not superimpose one story upon another as is now done, and their temple halls were always entered from the level. What has resulted when the Grecian style has been attempted for Science churches is really a nondescript, much more nearly resembling the work of the Romans than that of the Greeks. Some examples of it, skilfully handled, have been effective, but few are readily distinguishable as Christian churches and some are travesties on Greek architecture. (See *Encyclopedia Americana*, "Architecture," by Russell Sturgis.)

Just where the Renaissance, the Gothic, the Romanesque, or some other appropriate style should be used is, perhaps, often a matter of taste, but it also should frequently be governed by environment. The style of most of our business buildings is of either Roman or Greek origin (commonly grouped together under the term "Classic"). Such surroundings, and especially if they include tall office-buildings are apt to overpower the more delicate beauty of Gothic design; and often, in such cases, the Classic would be more appropriate. In New York, for example, we know how Trinity has been dwarfed by the tall buildings of Broadway, while the new Madison Square Presbyterian Church, amidst similar surroundings, appears quite at home. On the other hand the Gothic or Romanesque seems peculiarly fitted for suburban localities, where its spires may rise clearly above surrounding objects. No one, for instance, would wish to see Salisbury Cathedral removed from the green fields and spreading trees that surround it to the crowded thoroughfares of that part of London where St. Paul's stands. In such a locality as Salisbury's site, or even in the residence district of a large city where the surrounding buildings are not high, and where there are gardens, trees and lawns, the formal Classic is apt to appear, as compared with Gothic or Romanesque, cold, inhospitable, severe.

Another consideration is geographical location. Some localities have historic traditions or climatic characteristics which not only is it good taste to respect, but skilfully recognizing them often results in buildings that harmonize far better with their environments than do others that have slavishly followed the architecture of dissimilar localities. In warm countries, for instance, no matter what style is followed, because roofs are not required to shed snow they may be made less steep than those of colder climates and because in such countries protection from the sun's rays is often desirable, cornices should project further. In California, suggestions of the architecture of Spain, Italy and Mexico (where similar climatic conditions prevail) have been so successfully interwoven with some architectural work as to have excited widespread admiration, and even to have given rise to the idea that there is being created there a distinctly local style.

There is a practical side to Christian Science, which finds expression in its church edifices. They are to some extent, not alone places of worship, but also places where its healing work is often discussed. That is, Christian Scientists seem to have more reason than do most people for the informal chat after church meetings. These conditions have been met in many cases by the adoption of a vestibule or foyer enlarged over that usually provided in Christian churches. Oftentimes the basement or ground floor has been used for the

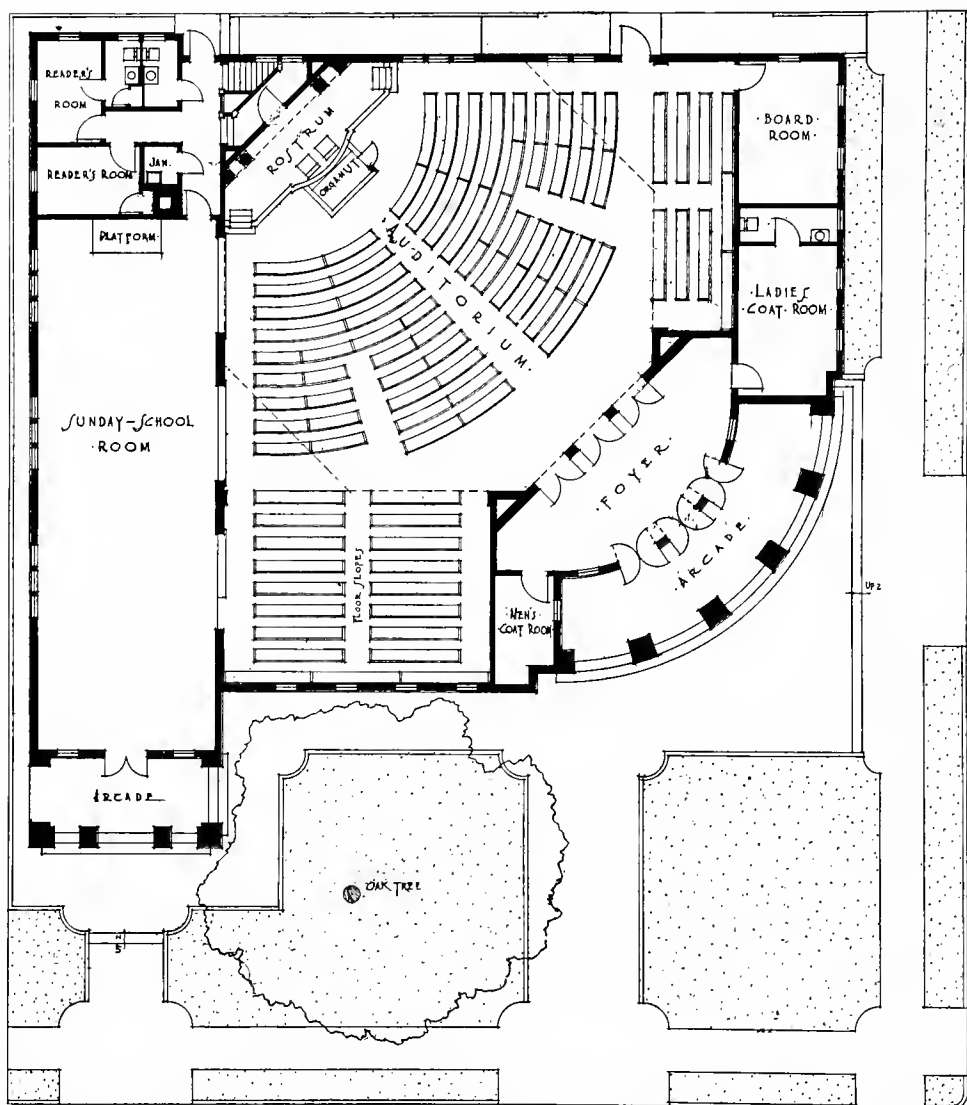
purpose, the main auditorium above being approached through it by means of a stair-well or wells, cut through the center of the seating space. A better way of accomplishing the same result is to have the stairways lead into a vestibule above, from which vestibule the auditorium is entered; the object being to have the auditorium and its approach both on the same level. The most effective way is to have the entrance, the foyer, and the auditorium all on the same floor, but it requires more room, and consequently, sometimes a larger lot and increased expenditure. At least the arrangement by which the stairwells are cut up through the auditorium floor should be avoided, as it is an undignified way of entering a large audience room and especially a church.

The church at Concord is a good way-mark. It is distinctly a Christian church. That it was done by one of the best firms in the country is attested by their subsequently winning against several distinguished competitors the commission for planning the Union Theological Seminary of New York. Many other cities also have Science churches that are a credit to them and to Christian Science. Recently there seems to be a desire to return to first principles. Many Scientists, as well as many others who are interested in Christian Science, have not been altogether proud of some of its architecture, and feel that its edifices should look less like library buildings, lecture-halls or banks than many of them do.

It is to be hoped that as Christian Science continues to grow, its architecture, by expressing more clearly a broad Christian character, may also grow—in truth and hence in real beauty.



FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, CONCORD, N. H.  
ALLEN AND COLLINS, ARCHITECTS



PLAN OF FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA  
ELMER GREY, ARCHITECT



FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA  
ELMER GREY, ARCHITECT

## What Christian Science Church Edifices Stand For

BY ELMER GREY

*[Reprinted from the Fine Arts Journal]*



**L**T HAS been said regarding the Hegelian system of philosophy that "just as no one can properly count himself a mathematician who has not mastered the calculus, so no one is properly equipped as a philosopher who has not subjected himself to the hard work necessary for the understanding of the system as a whole." This remark applies with equal truth to the metaphysical system of Christian Science. What the real force behind this great religious movement is can only be understood by thorough and unprejudiced study of the Christian Science text-book, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," by Mrs. Eddy. This article does not presume to take the place of such study, but merely to set down a few points regarding Christian Science which may suggest a phase of what its church edifices stand for.

In the realm of art, one object always striven for is harmony. It is most apparent in the art of music where, if not in some degree attained, there is no music, only discord. In architecture, the fundamental aim is for repose, for an absence of unrest. The elimination of all disturbing elements in the design must be brought about or the result is mere building, not architecture. In literature the same principle operates. One untrue thought, sometimes even a word, is enough to destroy the harmony of an essay, a poem, or a story, and to



ENTRANCE, CHURCH OF THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SOCIETY, MILWAUKEE  
ELMER GREY, ARCHITECT

separate it from that class of writing whose truth and particular form of beauty constitute literature. In each of these fields this principle of harmony governs with an insistence which knows no compromise. Any deviation from it at once removes results from the realm of true art. Its method of operation will serve to illustrate later on a point in Christian Science.

It has been said that art has nothing to do with Christian Science for the reason that the former "seeks to give an ideal value to material objects, while Christian Science declares that material objects are unreal," and also because the latter "commands a state of mind which seeks to ignore evil and pain for the sake of the value to the individual of moral optimism, a state of mind in which great art is not to be made, least of all great religious art." This point of view shows an entire misapprehension of the real nature of Christian Science.



Christian Science deals with immortal facts, not with finite appearances; and because most of its statements have reference to universal truth, to the immortal and all-inclusive, not the worldly and exclusive, many who think they do, really do not know to what it has reference when it speaks of such things as matter and evil being unreal. If we are to believe the accounts of Jesus' resurrection, of his miracles, and of the countless instances where he destroyed sin and suffering in the world, matter and evil are not eternal verities. They seem very real to mortal sense and Christian Science, like art, takes the world as it finds it; but also like art (when art is at its best) it seeks to raise the world above a restricted vision, above its worldliness. Pursuant to this object Mrs. Eddy uses the word reality in the sense of "that only which is eternal and incapable of discord and decay" (*Science and Health*, p. 468). It is in failing to accurately distinguish between what seems real to finite sense and what is infinitely real, to reconcile the sin and sorrow of the world with an infinite God whom all Christians agree to be good, that most religious and philosophical systems are faulty. The Hon. Richard Burdon Haldane, recent Secretary of War of Great Britain, believes with Hegel that "it is only for the finite spirit that evil exists" (Gifford Lectures, 1902-3, "The Pathway to Reality"), yet it would hardly serve the purpose of a war secretary "to ignore evil and pain for the sake of the value to the individual of moral optimism!" If this were what Christian Science did it would never have secured the hold it has upon vast numbers of the world's thinking people.

Art deals with the appearances of this world, with finite phenomena. It strives to convey to us the higher significance, the real import of these appearances; and insofar as it thus uplifts human thought from lower to higher objects of interest, pleasure or affection, it is in accord with the purposes of Christian Science. Thus the best art always does uplift thought. Its highest forms are invariably found where the highest thoughts are expressed. In any of its forms it tells the story of human aspiration as well as of human experience, and does this by means of symbols. To understand it aright is to apprehend the thought impulse back of the symbol. This thought impulse is its essential quality. In judging Christian Science church edifices, this point should be taken into account. They cannot be completely judged from an architectural standpoint alone. The nature of the thought impulse back of them must be considered. They may be ever so fine architecturally and yet not express the purpose which called them into being. They should be church-like.

This point is no less true of architecture than it is of other branches of art. Literature is not alone a mechanical arrangement of words combined in various ways to produce pleasant results; it is a record of human life and one also of aspiration expressed through word symbols. Music is not merely a display of technique; it is thought and aspiration expressed in the pleasing terms of melody. Art in painting is not only the clever handling of pigments; it is also the interpretation of nature's higher aspects, or of the better phases of human character, by means of symmetrical form, harmonious color, and arrangements of light. Henry Van Dyke has said that without the aim either to cheer, console, purify, or ennoble, literature has "never sent an arrow close to the mark." To mention such oratorios as "The Messiah," "St. Paul," and "Elijah" to any well informed music lover is to suggest to him compositions of an uplifting nature. The art of painting would be without its most valuable assets were it unaccompanied by the world's great religious, and hence moral subjects.



GENERAL VIEW, CHURCH OF THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SOCIETY, MILWAUKEE

This ethical aspect of art and its harmony of technique are interdependent characteristics. The one should never be separated from the other as an end in itself. Two things, one true and the other false, cannot be equally beautiful. Such a view entails either a misapprehension of what constitutes the truly beautiful, or the acceptance as beautiful of things which in the higher sense are not. Ever since art began, men have endeavored to express through it, not only their thoughts, but also their ideals; and whenever this twofold mission has been disregarded, art has become a snare rather than a benefit to mankind. Greek art had for its highest ideal harmony of form alone, thus limiting its possibilities. Christian art should express more than that, should include the ethical element as well as harmony of form, giving the former rank with the latter. Whenever this has not been done, whenever the gratification of sense has been given higher place than moral significance (as in architecture, for instance, when ostentatious display of ornament has outranked

appropriate expression of purpose), art has taken a backward step. In some of its highest manifestations art has endeavored to express the spiritual; but in that purpose it discovered its limitations. Spiritual ideas may be symbolized, or talked about and thus suggested, but they cannot be adequately revealed by human art. Art is comprehended through the senses, and the senses do not convey to us ideas of Spirit. Christian Science church edifices cannot really express the spiritual ideas they stand for, but they may suggest them; and when these ideas are understood, and their relation to historic Christianity is appreciated, the reason for planning these edifices in certain ways becomes clearer.

I think it was Elbert Hubbard who said that if a man does not believe as you do it proves but one thing and nothing else, that you do not believe as he does—in other words, that belief is only a matter of human opinion, anyway. In Christian Science as in Mathematics, Astronomy, or any other science, the criterion of efficiency is not belief, but understanding. Anyone can believe; to understand requires study and the experience of demonstration. Most good people believe (or at least think they believe) in one all-powerful, beneficent God; but they do not all practice it. The Orthodox churches refer to His Word in questions of moral import, but when they attempt to reconcile the sin and sickness of the world with a beneficent Deity, they become hopelessly involved. Sin is then looked upon either as a real power opposed to God, or as an essential reality authorized by Him! Sickness, they sometimes say, is a divine benefaction; but when it occurs they do not consistently defer to divine judgment regarding the time when it should cease! They strive mightily to overcome it. At best they consider these phenomena to be manifestations of “inscrutable wisdom,” for which we, with our finite intelligences, are unable to account.

In the field of natural sciences the universe is believed to be governed by natural law, over which God exercises but indirect control. Having at one time started its machinery going, He must then have left it in charge of self-acting, blind, physical forces which now control it. What Thomas Carlyle termed “an absentee God” is here the Deity, and is now sitting outside of His universe watching it go. A God who is not to be trusted in time of need, one who for any reason authorizes sin, or one who is off on a vacation, is not very satisfactory.

Christian Scientists accept Jesus’ teaching that God is ever-present, all-powerful, and all-harmonious Spirit. They therefore consider His universe to be governed by spiritual, not material, benevolent, not malevolent laws. They naturally insist that sin and suffering can be no part of such government. They aver that these phenomena stand in relation to it as discord does to music, as the untrue does to literature, or as the element of unrest does to architecture. They have Scriptural authority on their side telling us that Christ healed the sick, walked on the water, and raised the dead, in defiance of material laws. Later historical records show that for more than two hundred years after Jesus’ Ascension his disciples healed the sick in the same manner, after which time the true sense of the Principle seems to have been lost. It was rediscovered by Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy in 1866, and is now understood and is being successfully demonstrated by her followers.

This claim is supported by so many and such well authenticated cases of those who have been healed of almost every phase of sin or disease that it no longer can reasonably be questioned. Even an American bishop recently de-



INTERIOR, CHURCH OF THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SOCIETY, MILWAUKEE  
ELMER GREY, ARCHITECT

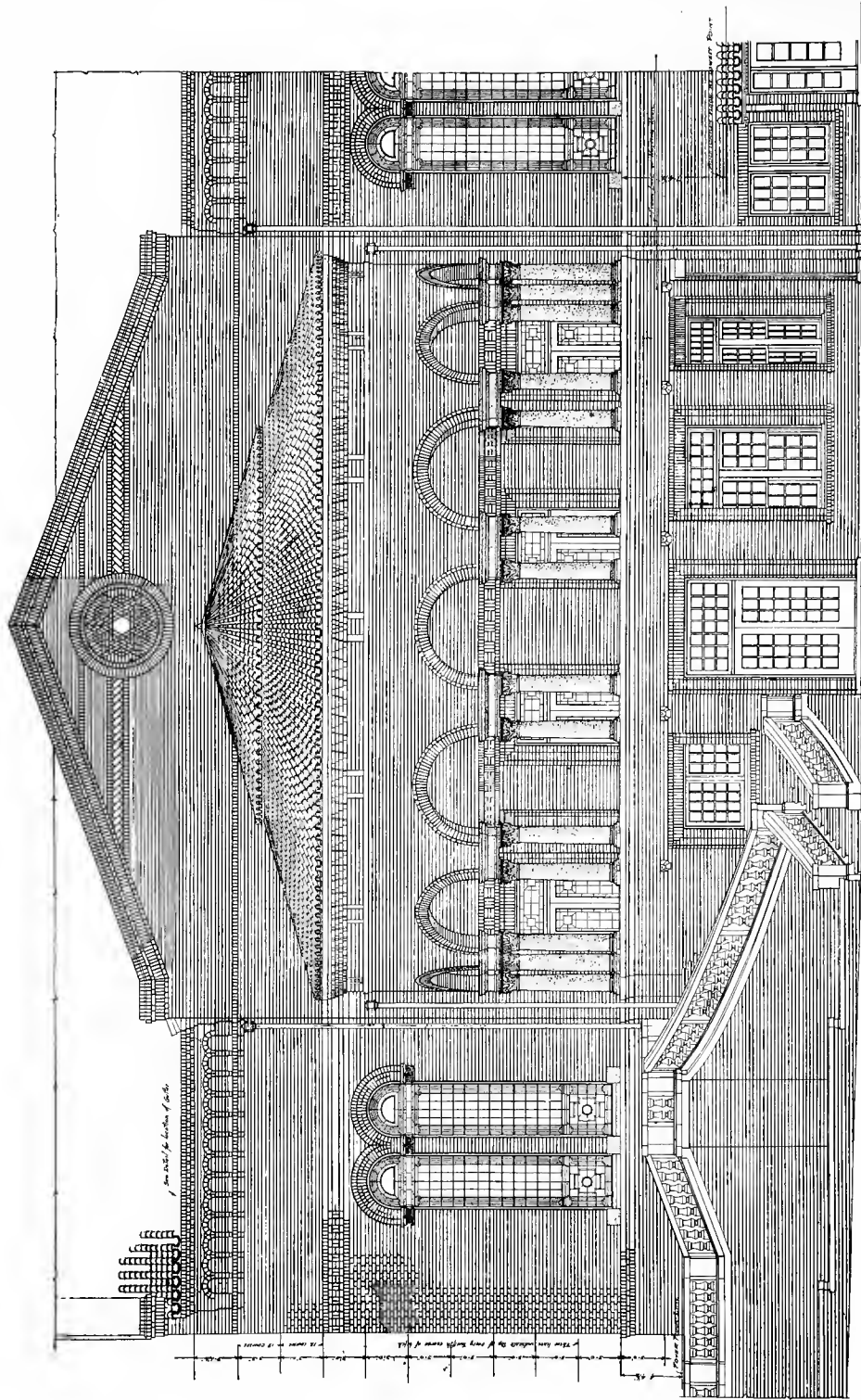
clared himself ready to admit that Christian Scientists heal by the Christ method. He wrote: "I happen to know of a number of instances where lives have been cleansed, where homes have been made happy, and where literally men have risen from sick beds to health as soon as they have become disciples of Mrs. Eddy. . . . So far from being amazed by the phenomena which have turned attention to Mrs. Eddy's movement, it would seem to me that the history of the Christian Church should lead us to expect them, and that we should rather be surprised that in Christian society everywhere they were not the usual thing and not the occasional incident. If what we find upon almost every page of scripture be true, and further, if the Church in her prayer-book be delivering to us a vital message, then the gospel of Jesus is a gospel of divine healing in the largest and fullest sense of that term. It seems to me, therefore, when 'Christian Scientists' by the affirmation of a great truth, accomplish great results, we should look to ourselves and examine our own methods and practices." (The Bishop's Quarterly, Los Angeles.) Thousands of people whom Christian Science has raised "from sick beds to health," whose "lives have been cleansed" and whose "homes have been made happy," not only believe in Christian Science, but have become convinced through its study, the application of its rules and the demonstration of its divine Principle, that it is an exact or scientific revelation of the Christ truth.

In accordance with this view, we will venture an opinion as to what Christian Science church edifices should in some respects be like. They are required solely for the purposes of worship. No dinners, bazaars, or social functions are given in them. No provision need therefore be made in their planning for such features as social halls and catering facilities, which features have made much church architecture of the past few decades anything but ecclesiastical in character. They should, of course, be conveniently planned, as otherwise they would not evidence the practical efficacy of the religion they stand for. Their vestibules should be unusually spacious, for Christian Scientists are always pleased to welcome strangers and to discuss the benefits derived from a right apprehension of their faith. The manner of approach to their auditoriums should be dignified, the auditoriums themselves should not be over-ornamented, and when the size of the lot permits, these churches may well be planned with the idea of a future extension in view. The Milwaukee church, for example, outgrew its capacity in five years.

Most Christian Science churches are classic in style, yet First Church of Christ, Scientist, of Concord, New Hampshire, the gift of Mrs. Eddy, is a gothic structure and has been much admired. An ex-clergyman (later a member of the Christian Science Board of Lectureship) once wrote of it, saying: "That which impressed me most in the noble church at Concord was that it fulfills a type. As I entered and stood within, waiting for the first distinct impression, I felt strength, beauty, the historic associations of Christian architecture, and in the midst of it all a simplicity that just escaped severity. Here, I said, is the fruition and fulfillment, in type, of the Puritan ideal—its rugged strength, its unswerving fidelity to conviction, its severe ideal of righteousness, all this is suggested, and yet there is added to it, freedom and beauty. That which our thought is to seek and hold shall be, and is, not only the things that are 'true,' 'honest,' 'just,' and 'pure,' but likewise, what our sterner ancestors omitted—the things that are 'lovely' and of 'good report.'"

Heretofore Christian churches have stood mostly for the preaching of the gospel. Christian Science stands for Christ's twofold injunction, "preach the gospel and heal the sick." It has an added message to express but none to take away. It should not therefore exclude from its architecture anything that is worthy in the Christian architecture of the past. The forms of worship carried on in the cathedrals were unlike the form of Christian Science worship, but this is also true of the Greek temple or the Roman churches. Neither of these classes of buildings, therefore, can be a fixed pattern of style for Christian Science architecture.

Architectural style is an intangible quality derived partly from motives suggested by previously built structures, partly from the architect's skill in combining and adapting those motives, partly from local surroundings, but also very largely from the taste and judgment of those who employ him and whose requirements he is bound to embody in his design.



ARCHITECT'S SCALE DRAWING  
FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST, LOS ANGELES

## RELATION OF ART TO IDEAL ACTIVITY



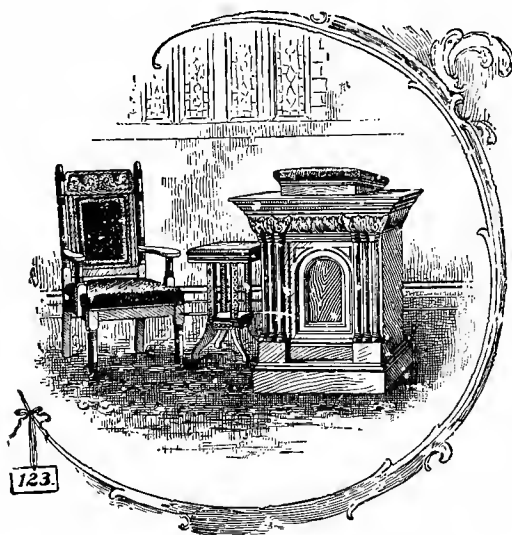
ALL that is argumentative, all that seeks, all that deplores and criticises and would either tear down or even build up in human expression, has relation only to human experience. Art sees dimly through the veil that which endures in changeless beauty. It can only express this ideal by a sort of symbolic language, as it were, using forms and figures or sounds or words familiar to human thought, but the ideal, even if vaguely apprehended, is there. The trend of human invention and discovery and progress all along the line is to eliminate harsh labor and struggle. Mechanical devices more and more relieve the round of toil. Let this eliminating process go on to its logical ultimate and the remaining activity of humanity must lie only in that which is joyful, beautiful, free. This is art, is it not? Art really includes not only dancing, for example, but all perfect and beautiful athletic prowess, running, swimming, leaping and the like, the whole art of motion. But the automobile and the aeroplane are also arts of motion, the machine being made more and more perfect and beautiful in its adaption to its use. The charm of dress and household arrangements is a form of art and also the gracious courtesies of social association. Besides these are the great branches of art technically so called, including of course music and architecture and poetry as well as painting and sculpture and engraving. Perhaps art, then, will eventually be seen as the serious business of humanity, the expression and enjoyment of beauty and harmony and joy, exactly that which has been hidden so long on earth under the phrase, "art for art's sake."

—*Christian Science Monitor*

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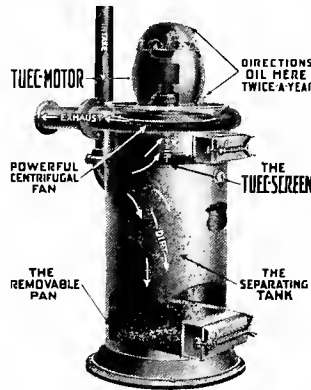
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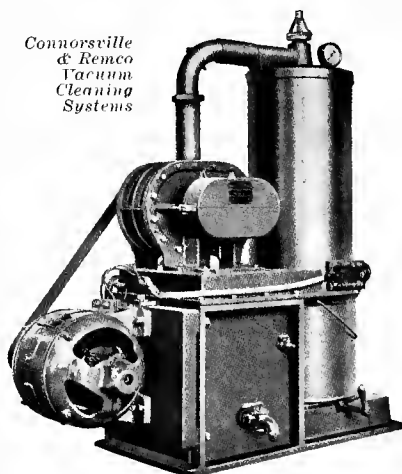
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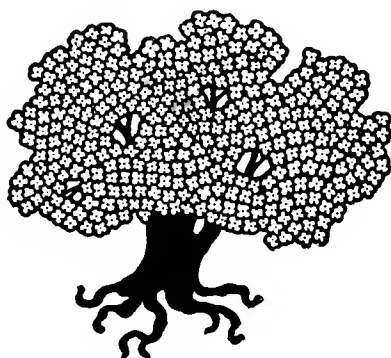
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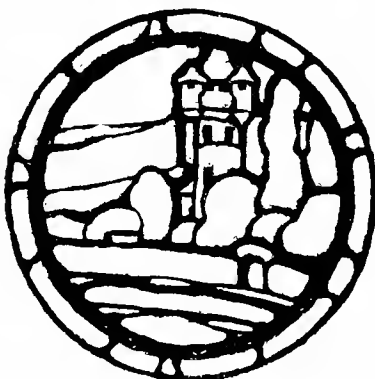
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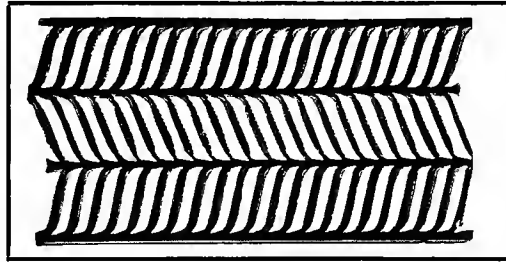
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